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ON THE VIRTUES OF UMT

By THADDEUS ASHBY

I AM A VETERAN. I wish I weren't; but I am, and I know whereof I speak. I especially wish I weren't when I read about some pompous ass, usually a "liberal" Legionnaire, as speaking for veterans. If you want to know what we veterans do *not* think, listen to our "spokesmen".

Our spokesmen want us to believe we acquired virtue in the service. Ergo, we should be willing to inflict the same virtue on the coming generation. But those of us willing to bestow UMT on our younger brothers are so inclined not because it will be good for them, but because it will help us to escape more service. Knowing we're not in sympathy with their cause (575,000 of us dropped out of the Legion; 250,000 dropped out of the VFW), both the Legion and the VFW are trying to sell us on UMT.

Why this schism between the leaders and the led? The ugly truth is that veterans organizations are vested interests; they want UMT because it will manufacture veterans. It will swell their ranks with new members (for a time); it will scare up subscribers for their weekly gazettes that whoop up the noise for Federal bonuses, and broadcast the notion that a man who has fought for his country is privileged to raid his country's treasury for loans, relief, free college educations, free housing and free appendectomies for his wife's third cousin. That is why our "leaders" want UMT. Let's look into their arguments.

Universal Military Training shouldn't be called merely a military expediency, they say — it does everything. It builds self-reliance — teaches trades — gives self-discipline — prepares you to face life. They tell parents it keeps boys off the streets, thereby relieving parents of responsibility — but they tell the boys it will give them the kind of adventure that will make men out of them.

Well, as for *teaching me a trade,* the Army checked me out on Tommy guns and .45 automatics. This might help me take up a new trade in case prohibition is voted in; or it might come in handy if they try to draft me again. As for *self-reliance,* let's see how much of that can be learned in that old character building institution, our Army. When I wanted clothes I stood in line at the quartermaster's. When I got hungry I stood in a chow line. When I ran out of ammunition I closed my eyes and hollered "ammo" and somebody brought it to me. When my rifle quit working I threw it away and "found" another.

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I acquired a devious cunning for getting out of work; in a flash I could change my stance from loafing to policing the area when a superior passed by. I learned the value of going on sick-call after a night of becoming a man with my buddies. I learned camouflage and protective coloring in emergencies. I learned that opportunities for graft were practically unlimited. In short, I got out of soldiering a complete knowledge of the art of "soldiering".

As for *preparing me to face life,* they didn't teach me to face any life outside barracks. The army discharged a shocking number of "service-connected" psychoneurotics, as well as men who would rather shoot themselves in the big toe than face any more of this life. As for *giving self-discipline,* the sergeant gave us discipline whenever he caught us, but we never hung on to any of it. Self-discipline is something nobody can give to anybody. It can neither be given nor received, shared nor taught, for it grows in the roots of the individual ego.

MAYBE you didn't benefit from forced service in the Army, the "new liberals" will reply, but anyway we still need UMT to provide our country with manpower. Their argument runs like this: We are in grave danger — we must sink or swim together — the voluntary system won't provide enough men — when a nation is attacked or about to be, it is necessary and proper to force people to fly to their own defense.

I ask: Why is it necessary? Why is it proper? Stop and think: Self-preservation is the first law; *defense of nation is an extension of that first law.* When volunteers are scarce, there must be something terribly wrong with the nation, for men are choosing not to defend a part of their own lives.

A man dying from cancer will beg for euthanasia. What is a nation dying from, when the government must force its citizens into service? The answer is in the question: *the nation is dying of too much government.*

The facile phrase WE MUST FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE comes from the most primitive method of dealing with forest fires. The animals in the forest run from the fire — toward water. As a last resort the rangers sometimes build a new fire, a controlled fire (they hope) to be put out the minute it stops the aggressive blaze. Where that controlled fire burns, is it any less destructive? Even in the forest, fighting fire with fire is a dubious expedient, the last possible resort; it is exactly like blowing up your own supply train to keep it from the enemy. The first resort is the enemy of fire: our fire extinguishers were invented by free human intelligence functioning *voluntarily.* So were our armaments.

What's the logical antithesis of dictatorships? The German Left was considered the opposite of Fascism. The French Right (it stood for Monarchy) was considered the

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opposite of Communism. But these designations Left and Right are not antitheses of dictatorship. The only antithesis, the only direct opposite of dictatorship, is a system that depends wholly upon volunteers. That's the doctrine of real liberals.

Here's the distinction: A true liberal never advocates the initiation of force — not on the part of anybody; least of all does he advocate that governments seize men and force them into service. Once any government tries to initiate force, a fight to the finish is the true liberal's answer — and this means not only that we must fight Russia, but that we must legally oppose the oppressive measures proposed by our own government. A Fascist initiates force; a liberal fights against it. He volunteers to defend himself.

BUT — there are ways of fighting! The Fascist way apes the methods of the other Fascists — it FIGHTS FIRE WITH FIRE — forbids the exercise of voluntary choice, in effect, becomes the enemy. I realize in making this distinction I accuse nine-tenths of the world of advocating Fascism. The gravity of the charge can't alter this conclusion: That man who believes in UMT, who proposes to fight a war with tsars, bosses, leaders, dictators, by forcing people to do what they would not do freely with their lives OR their property — he's a Fascist!

"Stop!" cried one of the "new liberals" who read this, "complete liberty is impossible in any organized effort, industrial as well as war!" He meant, of course, that in factories and armies men are told what to do, and that it would be impossible to allow workers and soldiers to decide for themselves what must be done. But he merely confuses his terms. In factories they tell the worker what to do, but he is free to refuse, quit; if he does so, he does it voluntarily. In all my years in steel mills, I never ran into a man who worked there against his will.

For the most important jobs in the Army, men cannot be drafted. Pilots, navigators, bombardiers, paratroopers, all must be volunteers. In the Infantry, the line executives down to the last corporal must volunteer for the job. Furthermore, even in wartime, if enough men don't like their commander they can call in the Inspector General and get transferred. We don't have this arrangement just to be democratic, but because it's necessary. Nobody can be compelled beyond a certain point. Therefore the draft cannot eliminate the essential role of volunteering. Then the point is whether or not a man should be drafted *into* the Army — not whether volunteering "works". Obviously it works.

I asked this "new liberal", who maintained that volunteering is impossible: "Mr., do you have a right to force anybody to fight for you?" He was above draft age, so the question made him mad. He muttered: "The nation has the right to force people to defend other people."

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I asked: "Do you think that as a member of the United Nations, we have the right to force France to help defend other members? Because", I said, "the French are showing reluctance to defend even themselves voluntarily." He growled: "If they don't fight, they're damn fools."

I agree. But that doesn't answer my question. So is a soldier in Korea a damn fool if he surrenders to the Communists. Anybody would rather be a draftee in the U.S. Army than a prisoner of the Communists — but is that the point? Is that our only choice? No. Our choice is between winning the war with Russia one of two ways: We can give up our rights to our own government, or we can come out against all dictatorships, including the one in Washington trying to put over UMT. To win that war, we'll have to lay down the terms on which we'll fight — stop talking about the survival of mankind — start talking about survival of freedom. Tell the government: We'll fight to preserve our freedom and for no other reason.

WHO BELIEVES in complete liberty? Do you? Liberty means voluntary action in all fields. Though ninety-five percent of humanity would gladly crucify me on this issue, I take comfort from the salute of the greatest recognized scientist-philosopher of all time. Aristotle waves the banner of liberty across 2,000 years, giving nourishment to my argument and courage to my heart, saying:

> "Public interest must always rest on private interest, and public spirit must consist in freely placing at the service of the community something that the individual instinctively considers his own. For the State deliberately to deprive the individual of what he regards as his is to create an artificial opposition between private and public interest, and to make a forced sacrifice of what should be a free gift."*

The pseudo-liberals, the *real* Fascists, will shriek back at Aristotle, answering his calm wisdom by hollering: *"But suppose there aren't enough volunteers. Who will defend our women folk? You propose to turn women and children over to the advancing Russian hordes."*

Let me ask these pseudo-liberals, and everybody who is deferred from the draft, this question:

If the draft were abolished, would no man volunteer to defend your women folk, your aged? Would no man come forward to defend your home? And if no man would fight for you, where do you get the right to force him to?

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* HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, B.A.G. Fuller, Henry Holt and Company. Aristotle's *Politics*).

Thaddeus Ashby writes: "While at Harvard I read *The Fountainhead* and *The God of the Machine,* and thus learned that everything being taught me was wrong." Since leaving Harvard, besides doing a turn in the army, he worked in steel mills, described his experiences for *Reader's Digest,* did some reporting for the Chicago *Tribune,* now writes regularly for *The Freeman.*

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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The First Round: The first important question on which candidates Taft and Eisenhower have clashed is the amount of foreign aid appropriations — and thereby hangs a tale.

The Administration asked Congress for approximately $7.9 billion. The Congressional committees last week cut this request to approximately $6.9 billion. Ike told the press that the $1 billion cut would be "seriously felt" and that any more reductions "might endanger" the military "build-up". Taft not only approved the $1 billion cut but also urged that another $1 billion be taken off. So did Democratic Senators Walter George (Ga.) and Ellender (Ga.). The latter added that Taft had taken a popular stand.

Veteran observers here remarked that Ike had really got out on the proverbial limb. For the whole matter of reductions in requests for appropriations involves a lot of double talk. Most informed people in Washington are aware of one fact rarely understood by the public: that, the Administration, in submitting budgetary requests, always follows a horse-trading policy. The budget makers — it is well known on Capitol Hill — ask for much more than they really need or expect to get. Much haggling between Congressional members and Administration spokesmen always goes on, with the latter screaming shrilly that their programs will be damaged beyond repair by "foolish" economies. In the end, a bargain is usually reached, with the Administration getting just about what it expected, or sometimes more.

What would the State Department settle for, in the present bargaining comedy? We consulted a prominent Administration official whose duties involve dealing with such matters, and therefore in a position to answer. With what figure [we asked] would the State Department, after a great many "fish-wife" protestations, be finally content? Our friend answered: "Oh, about $6.3 billion."

In short, that was probably the compromise figure at which Senators Taft and George were "shooting" when they urged that the appropriation for foreign aid be cut to about $5.9 billion. They knew, by the "feel" of the "haggling" contest that the State Department would be prepared to settle for about $6.3 billion, the inevitable compromise.

Hence, when Ike strongly warned against cuts of no more than $1 billion, he was either very simple and quite unaware of the old familiar bargaining game, or he was knowingly trying to assist the State Department hagglers in their efforts to see if they could get more than they privately regarded as necessary. Thus, Ike hardly stars as the great economizer he claims to be.

The Big Push: What many Taft followers fear is what they call the "big push", scheduled to take place around the 1st of June. They believe, and with reason, that a veritable flood of Ike propaganda will drench the entire country about the time the General returns. In the offices of the big Eastern mass magazines, copy is already being put to press, proofs are being read and art is being plated — a gigantic preparation for the days when presumably everyone will want to read about and see poses

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of the famous General. Mass political warfare — for that is what it will be — will be deployed on a scale and at an expenditure never witnessed here before. The Willkie blitz of 1940 — it is expected — will in retrospect seem insignificant in comparison with the Ike blitz of 1952.

Gridiron: Last Sunday, following the famous Gridiron banquet the night before, the town buzzed over an incident which occurred during the festivities and which received much publicity in the press and the radio, thereby creating a big flood of conversation throughout the town. Governor Dewey had found time to leave the dining room and closet himself with two big Washington figures. The *Washington Post*, Administration supporter and friend of these two gentlemen, published a front page account (May 11) of the meeting and thereby helped make recorded history.

The two were Secretary Acheson and Supreme Court Justice Frankfurter. The *Post* said that these men "conferred" with Dewey on the subject of foreign policy and that Acheson "insisted that the Republican nominee should support without reservations the Democratic program for aid to Europe". The *Post* mentioned that Dewey might become Eisenhower's "potential Secretary of State if the General won the nomination". As for Frankfurter, the *Post* reported that "he represented the viewpoint primarily of the late Franklin D. Roosevelt".

Dewey the next day denied that the meeting was a "conference". But Washington observers remarked that for the first time the collaboration of Acheson and Frankfurter and the participation of that Justice in political and foreign policy shaping was flatly pinned down by the press, without a shadow of a doubt.

Out of town guests at the Gridiron dinner expressed wonder that Judge McGranery got a favorable vote from the Judiciary Committee for confirmation, in view of that politician's low judicial stature and his work in "whitewashing" the notorious *Amerasia* subversive case. Local observers told their friends that the traditional attitude of "let the President name his own cabinet" prevailed and so the treatment of the new Attorney General was passed off as "The Ever Normal McGranery".

Koje Island: The blame for the revolt of the Communist POW's on the Korean isle is assigned to the influence wielded by the UN over our military authorities. Officers in the Pentagon — smarting under jibes from officers of our allies — view the incident of the mutiny and capture of General Dodd with dismay. But they are inclined to excuse the actions of Generals Dodd and Colson on the grounds that UN pressure has demoralized prison commanders.

They point out that, when the prisoner camps (following the beginning of the Korean war) were first set up, and for many months thereafter, the Army enforced strict discipline, according to "standard procedure": fair treatment, but no "babying". They had no trouble then. But, as time wore on, UN officials intervened and urged self-government for POW's. On orders from above, the Army yielded. The consequences were inevitable: Communists who are skilled in organizing disorder took over power within the "self-governing" camps. Since, by that time, the Army did not police the interior of the camps, the Communists managed to arm their followers; and the trouble followed.

Why did the Army yield? Our officials had learned to fear the high-level influence of the UN. For, UN officials through diplomatic channels had forced our Army authorities to soften treatment of Red guerrillas behind our lines. Accordingly, our military authorities did not — as reason and tradition indicated — crack down and enforce real discipline when the mutinies began some months ago. In short — according to these Pentagon sources — the real significance of the POW revolts is that this specific situation — like the whole military situation in Korea — has resulted from international control over what should be a purely national conduct of military operations.

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Supreme Court: We listened, the other evening, to three Senators match guesses about the forthcoming decision of the Supreme Court on steel seizure. Senator No. 1 thought it would be a rejection of the Government's claims for inherent powers and the score would be 7 to 2, the dissenters being Douglas and Black, the "left-wing". "The court reads the papers as well as election returns."

Senator No. 2 believed that the Court would side 5 to 4 in favor of the Government; that the greatness of the issue has shaken up the court as a whole and fragmented its opinions, but that philosophically most members of the Court lean towards collectivisim in government.

Senator No. 3 offered a new approach, which we have not seen aired in the current discussion in the press. He asked: why should the Nine give more power to the Executive, particularly with the Chief Executive now about to retire and some new "unknown", whether Republican or Democrat, to succeed him? A collectivistic philosophy among Court members — our friend remarked — is all very well, but the same members remain humanly jealous of their own power. Indeed, from the narrow standpoint of "power", it would be logical for the Court to side with the Legislative arm, in a two-arm front to check the swelling power of the Executive. And maybe even the "left-wing" on the Court would think likewise, fearing that the next Chief Executive might prove a "reactionary". Senator No. 3 concluded that the Court would therefore go against the pretentions of the Executive in the present *cause celebre.*

Gold Bonds: From Paris comes news that should be quite upsetting to the proponents of unlimited government counterfeiting. Gold has been put into a new issue of French bonds, to be floated before the end of this month, according to the papers. The new security will be backed by gold, at the open market price of the gold Louis Napoleon. Should this gold piece rise in price, the French Treasury will secure the bond holder against loss by revaluating the bond in proportion to the rise.

Lansing Warren, special correspondent for the *New York Times,* offers an explanation for this radical departure from French fiscal policy, in the issue of May 11; reporting that it has the "double object of enticing buyers from among the host of persons who received an amnesty on back taxation upon hidden funds and of inducing peasants and other hoarders of gold to invest in the new issue". That is another way of saying that the flight from the unbacked franc has been marked by hoarding, and that the only way to get this hidden gold into circulation is to offer a security backed by gold.

Somehow, the loose-money advocates cannot break the age-old faith in the metal.

The I-S-I: HUMAN EVENTS welcomes its welcome neighbor, the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists. The ISI is dedicated to the proposition that ideas have consequences, that our present push toward Socialism is the result of student indoctrination which began with the extra-curricular Socialistic clubs on our campuses some forty years ago, and that the way to counteract this trend is to start counterfires. The plan of the ISI is to foment the organization of campus cells for the study and discussion of Individualistic ideas and theories. Speakers who are qualified to explain Adam Smith, Locke, Albert Jay Nock, Charles Graham Sumner, the classical economists, the principle of limited government and such subjects, and to relate theory to current events, will be offered to these clubs. Additionally, books and literature will be provided the students. But the organization and activities of the clubs will be left to the students. It is a long-range program.

The immediate objective of the ISI is the formation of these groups. Readers of HUMAN EVENTS are requested to send in the names of students who might be interested. Avis Donohoe is the Secretary and William F. Buckley, Jr., our contributor and the author of the most controversial book of the season, *God and Man at Yale,* is the President. The address: 1136 Eighteenth Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

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Book Events

Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941, by Charles Callan Tansill. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company. $6.50. Reviewed by George Morgenstern.

Dr. Tansill's book demolishes what little is left of the official myths justifying the Roosevelt war. The Administration is an unwilling collaborator, for in opening some of its confidential files to historians who could be trusted to uphold the official legend it rendered itself vulnerable. It was shamed into granting Dr. Tansill access to the State Department secret files, and he knew what to look for and how to use it. This material, together with the manuscript collections of the National Archives and Library of Congress, provided the author with inexhaustible ammunition, and he has not wasted a shot.

Much of the diplomatic correspondence cited was omitted from such State Department compilations purporting to expose the roots of the war as *Peace and War* and the two *Foreign Relations* volumes dealing with Japan in the period 1931-1941. The deletions were certainly not accidental. Almost everything that Dr. Tansill discovered and the department chose to forget does not jibe with the official version of why there was a Pearl Harbor.

The narrative that Dr. Tansill unfolds will prove distressing to those who still cling to the belief that events inexorably forced the United States into war, that all of the morality was on our side, and that Roosevelt and his agents dealt candidly with the American people and with the nations which became America's opponents in war. The folly of the course of beating Germany and Japan into the ground when they stood as the only possible brakes upon Soviet imperialism ought by now to be manifest to a school child; but it looks even more lunatic, if that is possible, in the light of the mass of fresh and relevant data introduced by the author.

Japan had an accurate perception of the threatening nature of Soviet intentions and of Russian machinations in China. It repeatedly tried to impress the United States with the fact that it was a national imperative to do in Manchuria and North China what we had done under comparable conditions of developing anarchy in the Caribbean. Some of our brighter (and, of course, subordinate) diplomatic agents saw the logic of the Japanese case and agreed that Japan would, as she maintained, serve the capitalist world as a defensive outpost against aggressive Communism.

Not so, however, with Henry L. Stimson, the Secretary of State whom Hoover termed "more warrior than diplomat". His passion for sanctions at the risk of war, rejected by Hoover, was embraced by Roosevelt, whom he later served, appropriately, as Secretary of War. It was the Stimson doctrine of nonrecognition, applied first to Manchukuo and later to Ethiopia, that led to the attrition of American neutrality and self-interest. Cordell Hull, carried away by a passion for sterile moralism, fell into lock step and Roosevelt, incessantly preaching peace while tirelessly working for war, used this pair to get America into a snarl that could finally be resolved only by recourse to war.

Dr. Tansill shows how and when the United States could have had full understanding and peace without loss of principle or advantage. But the decision was not for peace. The author suggests that the locus of the Tokyo war crimes trial might more appropriately have been Washington, with a different set of defendants.

George Morgenstern, the author of *Pearl Harbor—The Story of Secret War* (Devin-Adair, 1947), has contributed articles to HUMAN EVENTS.

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